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NSC BRIEFING

BURMA (short form)

25X1

I. General Ne Win led "bloodless coup" last Friday (26 September).

Burmese
taking line A. Army ultimatum given Nu 23 September. Nu agreed resign when
publicly nothing
unusual happened. parliament meets 28 October. Ne Win to take over then as prime
minister for six months and then elections will be held.

- B. Army action apparently set off by planning by Home and Defense ministers to curb army power.

II. Political confusion had been growing. Began last spring with personal feud among top leaders of coalition which had ruled since 1948.

- A. Communists--backed by arms cached in jungle--were gaining political strength as result Nu's generous amnesty terms and non-Communist dissension.
- B. Nu's parliamentary majority apparently in danger. Non-Communist politicians evidently ready to fight over differences.

III. Non-Communist reaction to Ne Win's action one of general relief.

- A. Communist party members, recently surrendered, returning to jungle. Communist-influenced National Unity Front has denounced coup.
- B. However, Chicom foreign and defense ministers have sent "congratulations" to Ne Win.

IV. Ne Win action may tend to reduce non-Communist political factionalism.

- A. Surrender terms for Communists will be more severe, and Ne Win will not permit any "soft policy" toward Communists.
- B. Ne Win not considered politically ambitious and can serve as

7.

SAC BRIEFING

1 October 1958

Myanmar (long form)

- I. Bloodless coup in Burma on 23 September led by strongly anti-Communist General Nu Win and acquiesced in by Premier Ma. Nu staged to counter increasing Communist gains and to prevent outbreak of political violence. And by
- Army ultimatum on 23 September forced Nu to announce resignation 3 days later. Resignation to take effect when parliament meets on 26 October. General Nu Win will then take over premiership for six months.
 - During that period he will arrange for elections, probably next April.
 - Army action apparently set off by Home Minister and Defense Minister plans to bring army under closer government control through arrest or retirement top military leaders, including Nu Win.
 - Burmese, especially Nu, are now maintaining there was no coup, everything prearranged. ^{doubtful} This view not based on facts.
- II. Political confusion had been growing in past six months. Began with personal rift last spring among top leaders of coalition which had ruled since independence in 1948.
- Communist political strength, bottlenecked by arms cached in jungle, was growing as result of Nu's generous amnesty offer to surrendering insurgents and dissension among non-Communist politicians.

- B. Ne Win's control over his unwieldy parliamentary coalition (including Communist bloc) was declining and his majority appeared to be at an end.
- C. Non-Communist political leaders appeared ready to resort to violence.

III. Popular response to Ne Win action, except from Communists and Communist-influenced National Unity Front (NUP), one of general relief.

- A. Recently surrendered People's Comrade Party members are returning to jungle.
- B. NUP denounced coup as a right-wing plot.
Chinese Communist foreign and defense ministers have sent
1. No-Sino-Soviet-bloc position yet.
"congratulations" to Ne Win.

IV. Coup may result in gradual decline in factional antagonism among non-Communist leaders. Could lead to reconciliation of two feuding wings of former coalition, Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League.

- A. Ne Win's surrender terms for Communist insurgents will be more severe.
- B. Ne Win, as political non-partisan and close associate of leaders of both factions of former coalition, can serve as mediator.
 - 1. He is not considered rival for political power.
- C. Army probably will not permit any political grouping to develop any "soft policy" toward Communists in foreseeable future.